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BOSTON UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis

THE RELATIONSHIP OF JEREMIAH  
TO THE DEUTERONOMIC REFORM

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Professor of Old Testament  
by

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(A.B., Juniata College, 1938)  
submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts  
1941



PALESTINE  
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OF  
THE  
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EAST

THE PALESTINE BANK OF THE MIDDLE EAST  
INCORPORATED IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK

JOHN D. ANDERSON

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incorporation of the  
Palestine Bank of the Middle East  
in the State of New York)  
1941



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In a paper such as this, no claim is made to its being an exhaustive study; it will make the claim of submitting conclusive evidence to establish its thesis.

All the validation needed for this study is in the problem itself. As long as there remains a doubtful relationship in the world, that relationship is a valid subject of discussion. Skinner admits the difficulty.<sup>1</sup> "What was Jeremiah's attitude in this time is the most difficult problem of his biography, and is one on which his modern biographers are sharply divided."

In the paper presented, only one or two terms might be confusing. "The roll of Josiah," "Josiah's law book," and the

<sup>1</sup> John Skinner, *Prophecy and Religion*, (Cambridge: The University Press, 1912) p. 10 footnote.

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## INTRODUCTION

The title of this paper indicates its scope and aim. It is not intended to be a commentary on Deuteronomy or Jeremiah, nor is it to be a historical or biographical sketch of the prophet and his time. Rather, the aim is to establish the relationship of (1) Deuteronomy to Josiah's Reform and (2) to establish Jeremiah's attitude toward that reform.

The paper does not attempt to defend any particular authority's viewpoint, but rather to establish an independent thesis, based on a study of the text in the Bible and on the results of scholarship during the past 200 years.

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<sup>1</sup> John M. G. Leavelle, *Jerusalem and Palestine*, (Cambridge: The University Press, 1922), p. 70 footnote.



Code of Deuteronomy are used to mean the same thing, the book found in the temple in 621 B.C. The author intends that a clear-cut distinction be made between this code just named and the Code of Sinai.

The thesis is simply stated; this reform of Josiah's was a Deuteronomic one and Jeremiah was not friendly to the reform movement. In order to show this it will be necessary to show:

1. Deuteronomy or a part of it was the book found.
2. That this book was the basis of the reform movement.
3. That the reform movement was of such spirit and temper that Jeremiah could not approve of it.
4. It will have to be established from the text of Jeremiah that he did not approve of the reform movement.

This in short, is the outline and purpose. The reader must judge as to the validity of the various lines of argument used by the author in presenting the proof of his thesis, a thesis recognized by the author as contrary to the general trend of scholarship.

It is not necessary to face the problem of the authenticity of this passage. For our investigation it will not

<sup>1</sup>Dr. F. Stapton, "First and Second Kings", Abingdon Bible Commentary, (Cincinnati: The Abingdon Press, 1929), p. 432.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE SOURCES

#### I. II Kings 22:1-23:25a

There are two excellent Old Testament sources for the reform of Josiah, commonly called the Deuteronomic Reform, both are to be found in the historic records of the Hebrew people.

The Second Book of Kings is one which tells us the story of this reform (22:1-23:25a). There is little cause to doubt the truth of this record, since it was written and compiled within a few years of the actual happenings with which we are concerned. The date of compilation must be between 609 B.C. and 586 B.C.<sup>1</sup> the latter date being the date of the fall of Jerusalem which the historian does not mention. It would be highly improbable that a writer could falsify any record of a period through which some of, indeed many of, his readers had lived. Any mistakes or playing loosely with the facts would have been noted and set right.

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<sup>1</sup>D. C. Simpson, "First and Second Kings", Abingdon Bible Commentary, (Cincinnati: The Abingdon Press, 1929). p. 412.

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<sup>1</sup> D. C. Huntington, "First and Second Kings", Bible Commentary, (Cincinnati: The Abington Press, 1927), p. 212.



matter who wrote this section. It may be from the same hand that wrote the rest of the Books of Kings as Bewer thinks, or it may be an addition to the book.<sup>2</sup> No matter what it is, the record stands on its own merit as we have shown from its probable date.

This section, like the remainder of the Books of Kings, is an interpretation of history in the light of the Deuteronomic Code. Just as the other kings are judged good or bad according to how they fulfilled the requirements of the law, so Josiah is judged good because he obeyed the law.

We can accept the witness of this section of the Second Book of Kings without further question. Few authorities question the reliability of this record, therefore, it can be used without fear of having the facts twisted by a prejudiced historian.

It must be added that this historian would be prejudiced; he was one of the reformers and was deeply interested in telling all the facts of the reform. Because of this and his early date, the reliability of the source is assured.

## II. II Chronicles 34;35

The other historic source is to be found in the Second Book of Chronicles, chapters thirty-four and thirty-five. This source differs from the one previously mentioned in

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<sup>2</sup> Julius A. Bewer, The Literature of the Old Testament (New York: Columbia University Press, 1922, 1938 revision), p. 214.

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<sup>2</sup> Julius A. Beyer, The Literature of the Old Testament  
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several details. The general trend of scholarship has been to accept the Kings as more authentic or reliable when there is a difference. When the Chronicler gives material not found in the Kings, then it is accepted with a grain of salt.

The Chronicler wrote much later than the writer of the Kings and had Kings as one of his sources. Why he chose to differ in places we are not know. It is known that he must have had sources which are now lost, which he thought were better than the Kings. No doubt much of his material came from the oral tradition which was fluid and subject to error.

DeWette throws some light on the problem as to why there are variations between Kings and Chronicles. He insists that the variations are due not to a variation of sources, but to a desire of the scribe to shape history in conformity with the law and give the law the place in history which they felt it should have. This is based on the theory that Samuel and Kings were written before and without much Deuteronomic influence.<sup>3</sup>

In II Chronicles it is stated that there was a reform before the book of law was found. One is tempted to think that the Deuteronomic historian who wrote Kings would be likely to be in error here out of loyalty to the Book of Deuteronomy. This idea is cast aside when we remember the date we have set for his writing. It is necessary simply to men-

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<sup>3</sup> Julius Wellhausen, "Pentateuch", Encyclopaedia Britannica (New York: Charles Scribner, 9th edition, 1881). XVIII, p. 505.

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tion the fact that a few scholars admit that the records are both correct and that there were two reforms. It is hardly likely that in a period of six years there could have been two such sweeping reforms as we have recorded here.

The consensus of opinion seems to be that II Kings is right in having the reform come in the eighteenth year of the reign of King Josiah. The differences between the two authors are accounted for on the grounds that they had divergent interests. The first historian was in the line and thought of the prophets and he put his emphasis on the effect of the reform on the external appearance of the cult. The Chronicler was a priest or of priestly interests and therefore he was interested in giving the detail of the Passover service and all the functions of the priests in the service.

### III. Jeremiah

Evaluating Jeremiah as a source is a more difficult task. Much of the book which bears his name was not written by him. Baruch wrote a great amount of it and then editors have added a great number of oracles which are so similar in nature and spirit that we cannot tell them from Jeremiah's own.

Duhm stands at one extreme in answering the questions as to what Jeremiah really wrote. He states that Jeremiah only wrote in one poetic meter; therefore, all the writings of the Book of Jeremiah not written in this poetic style are

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not from the hand of the prophet.<sup>4</sup> This is just a bit too simple, and too extreme; such criticism applied to other works would destroy some of them completely. No man always writes in the same form. If Duhm's theory is accepted, much is lost that is of value in Jeremiah; only one-fifth would be left.

The other extreme would be to accept the whole book as from the hand of Jeremiah. No critical scholar would concur on such a view. There are passages which are plainly from the pen of Baruch: 19:1 - 20:6; 26-29 etc.

One of the best tables at hand is that of Bewer:<sup>5</sup>

During the reign of Josiah 1-6. 7:2--12:6(except 10:1-16) and 31:2-6, 15-21.

During the reign of Jehoiakim 7:1-20. 12:7-13; 17. 13:20-20. (17:19-27 excepted). 22:1-23. 25:1-24 (worked over).

During the reign of Jehoiachin 13:18f. 22:24-30.

During the reign of Zedekiah 21. 23:1f; 9ff. 24.

After the fall of Jerusalem 31:31-34.

This table covers the material that has a bearing on the subject of the reform. To arrive at anything like a satisfactory table would involve problems far beyond the scope of this paper; therefore, this table of Bewer's will be accepted.

There is another advantage to this table, it dates the material involved. Just a superficial glance at the table

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<sup>4</sup> Bewer, op. cit., p. 168.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 167.

not from the hand of the prophet. This is just a bit too simple, and too extreme; even criticism applied to other works would destroy some of them completely. No man always writes in the same form. If Darius's theory is accepted, then at least that is of value in Jeremiah; only one-fifth would be left. The other extreme would be to accept the whole book as from the hand of Jeremiah. No critical scholar would concur on such a view. There are passages which are plainly from the pen of Jeremiah, 10:1 - 20:26, 28-29 etc.

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<sup>2</sup> Beyer, op. cit., p. 108.  
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shows that the material in the book is not arranged in chronological order. One wonders what method the compiler of Jeremiah used in assembling his material; he seems to have no sense at all for the chronological order.

One additional thing must be said: that material, which comes from the hand of Baruch, is just as reliable, historically as the material from the hand of Jeremiah. Baruch was a true friend of Jeremiah and has caught his spirit in every way. What he writes expresses Jeremiah's thought as well as gives a true biography of the prophet.

#### IV. Deuteronomy

In a real sense Deuteronomy is going to be the problem rather than a source of information. There is no question of authenticity to raise here; it is known as a compilation of later date than its writers wished it to be known. Written after the time of Samuel, it is post dated back into the latter days of Moses. This very probably was not as intentional as we have taken it to be, rather it is more probable that it was just a normal literary form in that day.

The other problems which might be raised will be answered in the main body of discussion since one of the purposes of this paper is to determine the relationship of the Book of Deuteronomy to the reform which bears its name. In that discussion the date, authorship and purpose will be

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It will be sufficient to state here that some of the book will be dated later than other parts and will therefore be ruled out as source material.

The record reads that, in the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah, Shaphan the scribe, was sent to the temple to collect the offering for the building fund of the temple. While he was at the temple getting this money, Hilkiah, the priest gave to him a book which he had found in the temple. Shaphan saw that this was an important book and took it to Josiah.

When the king heard the scribe reading the book, he grew fearful and rent his clothes. He was not quite sure that this was an authentic law of Yahweh, so he sent a committee to see Hilkiah, the prophetess, in order to check on its reliability. The prophetess sent word back that this was indeed the word of the Yahweh and knew, and that it must be kept. She added an oracle to the effect that Josiah should put these words in practice and then he would die in peace.

Upon receiving this oracle, Josiah called all the men of the nation together to hear the code of the covenant read. After the reading, the king made a covenant in the name of all the people. He promised Yahweh to fulfill all the words of the book, and all the people accepted this covenant.

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The record reads that, in the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah, Shaphan the scribe, was sent to the temple to collect the offering for the building fund of the temple. While he was at the temple getting this money, Elishah, the priest gave to him a book which he had found in the temple. Shaphan saw that this was an important book and took it to Josiah.

When the king heard the scribe reading the book, he grew fearful and rent his clothes. He was not quite sure that this was an authentic law of Yahweh, so he sent a committee to see Huldah, the prophetess, in order to check on its reliability. The prophetess sent word back that this was indeed the word of the Yahweh and knew, and that it must be kept. She adds an oracle to the effect that Josiah should put these words in practice and then he would die in peace.

Upon receiving this oracle, Josiah called all the men of the nation together to hear the code of the covenant read. After the reading, the king made a covenant in the name of all the people. He promised Yahweh to fulfill all the words of the book, and all the people accepted this covenant.



Josiah did not wait, to put the code into effect. As soon as the code became law, he had the foreign vessels in the temple burned and their ashes carried to Bethel. These vessels were for Baal, the grove, and the hosts of heaven. With this example from their king, the men returned home to put into effect the code throughout the whole land. They deposed the priests at the high places all over the land and broke down the altars and groves.

The king led in the reform; he had the houses of the male prostitutes at the temple destroyed. All of the priests were brought to Jerusalem and their high places were destroyed. The horses of the sun were taken away and the worship place of Molech was defiled. The king even broke down the altars that Ahaz and Manasseh had built in the palace for their wives. Next he took the altars that Solomon had set up in the high places near Jerusalem and destroyed them.

Nothing could stop the king. He went to Bethel, which at this time was under his dominion, and there defiled the altar and the high place that Jeroboam had set up. In Samaria he killed all the priests without giving them the chance to come to Jerusalem.

The final destruction fell on the witches and the wizards and all who had familiar spirits. But even this was not the end, the destructive purge did not end all at once; spies kept watch to find idol worship and breaking of the code. Violations of the code were in most cases punished by

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death. The religion of Yahweh had to be kept pure at any cost.

After the purge had cleaned up most of the country, Josiah called for a National Passover to be held in Jerusalem. This was the greatest Passover that had ever been held.

The results of this reform then were; (1) the purification of the cult, (2) the destruction of all local altars, (3) the centralization of all worship in the Jerusalem temple. Since this reform was a thoroughgoing one, it is pretty safe to assert that these were also the purposes of the reform.

Now, on the assumption that everything has a cause, the cause of this reform can be sought. The idea that this was just the natural outcome of the forces at work in the religious life of the nation can be eliminated at once. Reforms that grow naturally are more permanent than this one was. Reforms that are begun externally or forced upon a society do not outlive their sponsors. This reform died with Josiah, therefore, the cause must be sought in some event of Josiah's life rather than in the social or political life of the nation.

The record in II Kings states that the cause, was a book that Shaphan found in the temple. There is no reason to doubt the record in this case, but there has been a great deal of speculation as to what this book was. The most common assumption is that this was the kernel of the present Book of Deuteronomy.

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The record in the Second Book of Chronicles concurs in these details and even more important, it gives the same impression that II Kings gives, namely, that Josiah forced this reform. The people were not anxious for it, in fact, it was quite a burden for those poor and faithful Jews far from the capital city.

From what is known of the reform, can be drawn some of the reactions to it. People had worshipped Yahweh at local shrines for generations. Now they had to go to Jerusalem. At their own shrine they knew and loved their own priest, while in Jerusalem they had to go to a strange priest. Before the reform they could worship when they chose. After the reform, they could worship only when they were in Jerusalem.

Even worse than the foregoing, they had to see their altars, set up by their ancestors generations ago, desecrated and destroyed. They saw the chance to worship God as they chose being denied them.

It is little wonder that such a reform failed. Not only was it a hardship on the people as it was set up, but it could, and apparently did, grow worse as it progressed. The priests at Jerusalem began to feel their power and to assert it. This reform, was the beginning of the degradation of the priesthood.

But to return to the roll that was found in the temple; on the assumption that this was the book, or part of the Book of Deuteronomy, it must be examined to see if it or any part

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### CHAPTER III

#### DEUTERONOMY AS THE LAW BOOK OF JOSIAH

In order to establish the fact that Deuteronomy was the roll found in the temple, the book that caused the reform, it will be necessary: (1) to show that Deuteronomy was written early enough for Hilkiah to find in 621 B.C.; (2) that there is a real connection between this book and the record of what occurred, found in II Kings.

The first problem then will be to settle the question of the date of Deuteronomy. In the literature of Deuteronomy there are many answers given: (1) Moses wrote it in the days before the conquest; (2) the prophets at the time of Samuel wrote it; (3) the reformers in and shortly after the days of Hezekiah wrote it; (4) Jeremiah or another contemporary of Josiah wrote it; (5) it was written by priests of the exile.

It is not necessary to give much time or space to the study of the first suggestion of the Mosaic authorship. Few scholars, except the fundamentalist group, hold to the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy. The most recent reference noted of any quality of critical scholarship is to be found in the novel, I Yahweh.<sup>1</sup> There the Mosaic authorship is accepted. In most cases this book is based on good critical scholarship;

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therefore, it cannot be passed by as impossible.

Havernick, in 1850 when the discussion was at its height, thought he had settled the problem for all time. His is an excellent critical study of the problem which arrives at the conclusion that the whole book was written by Moses.<sup>2</sup>

Still another witness must be mentioned. Adam Clark, in his excellent but outdated commentary, accepts for the most part, the Mosaic authorship. But he adds two possibilities. He allows first that Joshua may have added the section on the death of Moses and that Ezra may have written those sections which bear most heavily the mark of the priesthood.<sup>3</sup>

The tradition that Moses wrote the Book of Deuteronomy is of early date. It is known that the chronicler accepted it (II Chronicles 25:4). From that date the tradition came down through the rabbins to the early Christians. The rabbins did say that the last eight verses of Deuteronomy were not written by Moses, but added by a later hand.

Since the Mosaic authorship is not generally accepted one or two difficulties are sufficient to show the line of criticism.

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<sup>3</sup> Adam Clarke, The Holy Bible, The Text with a Commentary and Critical Notes, (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1830) I, p. 732.

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but some other writer speaks of him in the third person.

2. The statement "There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses,"<sup>4</sup> shows a man looking back to Moses through a long line of prophets.<sup>5</sup>

When the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch was questioned, (it was not until the seventeenth century that the doubts concerning the correctness of the traditional view came into current writings) the defenders were quick to see that a defense of the Mosaic authorship for Deuteronomy was impossible and relinquished it at once in order that it might not be the weak link in the chain which would destroy the whole theory of Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.

With this in mind it is safe to conclude that Moses did not write the Book of Deuteronomy. It must also be remembered that the book was apparently written in the name of Moses.

The next theory is that the book was written by the followers of Samuel during the early days of the monarchy. One name stands out among the proponents of this view, Adam C. Welch.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Deuteronomy 34: 10.

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He builds his argument on the ground that nowhere, with the single exception of (Deuteronomy 12: 1-7) is the centralization of worship demanded. Then he states that (12: 1-7) is a later addition.<sup>7</sup> Then, with a clear field, he makes his case that the purpose of Deuteronomy is to purify the Yahweh worship of its heathen and Canaanite influences.

After showing that the laws do not demand centralization but purification, Welch continues and shows that the period in which these laws were necessary was not just in the time of Josiah, but throughout all of Israel's history. He then dates his Deuteronomy over a period of years beginning with the time of Samuel and extending until after the time of Solomon.

The Deuteronomic code is the outcome and one expression of that religious and national movement which arose in Benjamin and Ephraim, and which in its beginning is associated with the personality of Samuel. It sprang up after the people had made good their footing in Palestine.<sup>8</sup>

One or two examples of his type of evidence ought to be illustrated. He shows that the command to have the feast at Jerusalem was incapable of fulfillment, yet Josiah had at least one such centralized Passover. He argues that the haste and detail of the law would make it improbable of meaning Jerusalem, but rather many local shrines where Yahweh might choose to place his name.

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Another argument for the early date rests on the fact that there was an early need for some law that would keep Yahweh worship free from the influence of Canaanite cults. The trouble is a need does not always bring forth a law. In fact, if the people like the abuse, it is highly improbable that they would legislate against it. The force of this argument is lost when the fact is recalled that the prophets did not remind the people of this law, as they would<sup>have done</sup>, if it were in existence.

All argument for an early date falls on the grounds that the prophets would have made extensive use of such a law if it had been around.

In McFadyen is found a footnote summarizing a magazine article written by Julius Beyer on the possibility of an early date for Deuteronomy. "The ordinary critical theory has not been destroyed: its foundations appear to be still sound and strong."<sup>9</sup>

In direct opposition to Welch's view is that of Hölscher.<sup>10</sup> It was Hölscher who seems to have prodded Welch on to his view. Hölscher does not stand alone as champion for the later date of Deuteronomy. At about the same time, Berry in America, and Kennett in England, set forth independently similar views.

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<sup>9</sup> John Edgar McFadyen, Introduction to the Old Testament, (London: Hodder & Stoughton Limited, 1932) p. 73 note.

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All three see in Deuteronomy elements that are post-exilic. Hölscher is the most extreme of the three, stating that almost all of the Code of Deuteronomy is post-exilic. These arguments begin at about the same place Welch begins; both feel the utter impracticability of the code being enforced at the time of Josiah.

In order to solve the problem. Hölscher says that the code was drawn up by impractical dreamers, priests, in captivity. It was their ideal state, their city of God, their dream and hope for the future.

Welch holds this theory up to ridicule,<sup>11</sup> yet it is no more unreasonable than his own. He draws a foolish picture of a silly group of priests drawing up a ritual in accordance with a pet theory of theirs while the nation is suffering in agony. That is not quite fair. Hölscher ought to have the last word. What would be more likely than that in an age of despair a book such as Deuteronomy might have been written or at least put in its present order.

Anyone far from home, dreaming, hoping to return, idealizes that home. As these priests sat "By the waters of Babylon," is anything more likely than that they should take their old ritual and draw and revise it according to an ideal they had. This would account for the fact that centralization was called for, it would account for the difficulty in putting the theory into practice.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

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Even though this hypothesis of Hölscher's answers many of our problems, still it is not the final answer since it does not account for the fact that a book very similar to the one Hölscher said was written in 500 B.C. was found in 621 B.C. Neither does it answer Graham's pertinent question, "How could so important a book as Josiah's law book be lost and this priestly dud be kept so importantly?"<sup>12</sup>

One more theory that has not been accepted must be examined. Some scholars have said that Jeremiah or some contemporary of Josiah's wrote the book and put it in the temple, perpetrating a "pious fraud."

There is good literary basis for believing Jeremiah wrote the book. It is in a style similar to his. It contains much in common with his book and it is indeed in his spirit.<sup>13</sup>

Several difficulties stand in the way here. (1) It makes Jeremiah or someone else use lying methods to achieve God's ends. Such methods would be contrary to the spirit of the book itself. (2) Internal examination of Deuteronomy shows many authors and many time periods rather than a single decade of writing. (3) It does not account for the immediate acceptance of Yahweh's word. (4) A statement might be added, that the weight of evidence by the authorities go against this

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<sup>12</sup> William Creighton Graham, "The Modern Controversy about Deuteronomy", The Journal of Religion, VII, 400-1, July, 1927.

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book being written near 621 B.C.<sup>14</sup>

This survey of unacceptable theories has not exhausted the supply. The date of Deuteronomy has been set from the time of Moses, approximately 1250 B.C. to the post-exile days, 500 B.C., and everywhere in-between. Sellin, who has not been mentioned, disregards all the rest of the scholars and insists that this was the temple law on which the reform of Hezekiah was based.<sup>15</sup> Many eminent men, too numerous to name, chose to run a lonesome course and champion a peculiar date.

Throughout the whole trend of scholarship, two dates seem to take pre-eminence. (1) Moses' authorship in 1250 B.C. which we have discarded, and (2) the date of approximately 650 B.C.<sup>16</sup> during the reign of Manasseh. The greater number of critical scholars from DeWette down, all seem to place the date of the actual writing of the book near 650 B.C.

There is not much to challenge in this view, nor is there much to add. It is quite reasonable that the men who

<sup>14</sup> John Skinner, Prophecy and Religion, (Cambridge: The University Press, 1922), p. 92.

"The truth lies between two extremes. The reformation of Josiah was not brought about by the dead hand of written authority apart from living aspiration of the age; nor was the book a contemporary production of the reform movement of the reign of Josiah."

<sup>15</sup> Dr. E. Sellin, Introduction to the Old Testament, (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1923) p. 74.

<sup>16</sup> Elmer A. Leslie, "The Chronology of the Old Testament", Abingdon Bible Commentary, (Cincinnati: The Abingdon Press, 1929) p. 111.

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<sup>17</sup> E. Wellin, *The Chronology of the Old Testa-**ment*, (London: The Westminster Press, 1923), p. 111.



instituted the reform under Hezekiah would want to see the reform continued, but with kings on the throne who were unsympathetic to their views, they could not openly advocate reform. Their best method was that which they chose; to write out their code and place it in the temple where it was bound to be found.

In brief, the case for this 650 B.C. date is: It must have been written before it was found in 621 B.C.; it must have been after the time of Hosea and Amos since there is no idea of centralization in either of them.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, it was written between 725 B.C. and 621 B.C. Since no appeal to this book was made in 701 B.C., the time of Hezekiah's reform, it must have come after that reform. One thing is certain, the date must be between 701 B.C. and 621 B.C.

'Julius Bewer writes on the case for the early date of Deuteronomy' and concludes: 'The ordinary critical theory has not been destroyed: its foundations appear to be still sound and strong.' L. B. Paton writes on the 'Case for the Post-exilic Origin of Deuteronomy' and concludes: 'The advocates of the Post-exilic date of Deuteronomy fail to refute the arguments of the school of DeWette for its origin in the seventh century, and fail to produce any convincing evidence of its origin in the fifth century'. George Dahl writes on the Case for the Currently accepted date of Deuteronomy'. 'In spite of certain unresolved difficulties, it would seem that the preponderance of evidence is still in favor of that view of the date of Deuteronomy which has been established by many decades of laborious and brilliant research.'<sup>18</sup>

Now this does not mean that some man sat down and produced the Book of Deuteronomy either from his own head or at

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<sup>17</sup> This is another reason Welch had to get rid of centralization in order to get his date back before 725 B.C.

<sup>18</sup> McFadyen, op. cit., p. 73 footnote.

indicated the reform under discussion would want to see the reform continued, but with things on the far side were not sympathetic to their view. They could not openly advise reform. Their best method was that which they chose to write out their words and place it in the temple where it was found to be found.

In brief, the case for this 500 B.C. date is: It must have been written before it was found in 501 B.C. It must have been after the time of Moses and since there is no idea of centralization in either of them.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, it was written between 750 B.C. and 501 B.C. Since no appeal to this date was made in 701 B.C., the time of Hezekiah's reform, it must have come after that reform. One thing is certain, the date must be between 701 B.C. and 501 B.C.

'Julius Beyer writes on the case for the early date of Deuteronomy' and concludes: 'The ordinary critical theory has not been destroyed; its foundations appear to be still sound and strong.' J. B. Taylor writes on the 'Case for the late date of Deuteronomy' and concludes: 'The advocates of the late date of Deuteronomy will do well to remember that the school of Deuteronomy for its origin in the seventh century, and still to produce any convincing evidence of its origin in the fifth century.' George Dahl writes on the case for the currently accepted date of Deuteronomy: 'In spite of certain unresolved difficulties, it would seem that the preponderance of evidence is still in favor of that view of the date of Deuteronomy which has been established by many decades of laborious and brilliant research.'<sup>18</sup>

Now this does not mean that some men set down and produced the book of Deuteronomy either from their own head or at

<sup>17</sup> This is another reason which had to get rid of centralization in order to get the date back before 750 B.C.

<sup>18</sup> Beyer, op. cit., p. 73 footnote.



the dictation of God. There is a very real sense in which all the scholars are right. The book is a compilation, it has gone through many editions, there have been radical changes in it. There are some sections that could be ascribed to Moses or at least they are extremely early. The section which deals with dead bodies polluting the land is extremely primitive and could very well have been a bit of the Moses tradition. All through the life of Israel, laws had to be made, and Deuteronomy is a compilation and re-editing of them with emphasis on a needed reform.

The group most likely to have made this particular compilation, which was used as Josiah's law book, would be the remnant of Isaiah's disciples school, which apparently was continued by Micah who was the leader during the reign of Hezekiah.<sup>19</sup>

This date, 650 B.C., is not set as the date for the complete writing of the Book of Deuteronomy, but is simply a date set for the compilation and editing the most important section. Some of the laws were in existence previous to 650 B.C., these were re-stated to fit the needs of the day. Perhaps Welch is also right, that centralization is forced upon the original. (Chapter 12: 1-7 could have been written at this time.)

After 650 B.C. the book did not remain static. There were numerous editions and each had some gloss added and per-

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<sup>19</sup> Jeremiah 26: 16-19.

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After 650 B.C. the book did not remain static. There were numerous editions and each had some laws added and per-



haps each had an introduction of its own. It cannot be stated when Deuteronomy reached its present form, but what is important is that there was an edition available in 621 B.C.

The mere fact that an edition of the Book of Deuteronomy was in existence does not require that it be the book found by Josiah. A connection between the reform movement and the laws of the book must be established. Two ways may be used to show this connection: (1) If the purpose of Deuteronomy coincides with that of the reform as recorded in II Kings, then there is a definite connection. (2) If further specific laws can be found in Deuteronomy which demand the action recorded in II Kings, then the connection is sure.

There seems to be no question but that the purpose in the mind of Josiah was to centralize all worship. He destroyed all places of worship except Jerusalem. He took the priests to Jerusalem or killed them. He called all the nations together for a great Passover feast. This all looks like, and is, centralization.

Not only did he centralize the worship, but he also purified it. He cleansed the temple itself of all cultic symbols and the worship of all cultic practices.

A third emphasis is also noted. There is to be unity to the worship. All of Israel is called at one time to worship the one God in his one temple. Thus in II Kings are three principles. (1) Centralization of worship; (2) purification of worship; (3) unity of worship, people, and God.

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of worship; (3) unity of worship, people, and God.



According to authorities, the main theme of Deuteronomy is centralization of worship in Jerusalem. Fosdick says:<sup>20</sup>

Whereas Elijah, therefore, had been in despair because the local altars had been cast down, the prophetic party some two centuries later were in despair because they were not cast down. So Deuteronomy, proclaiming the doctrine of Yahweh's unity, proclaimed as an indispensable accompaniment the law of one sanctuary.

He makes centralization secondary but he is proving a point of his own; i.e., the unity of oneness of God. It is significant that he adds that centralization must accompany the unity of God.

One of the main purposes therefore behind the publication of Deuteronomy was the attempt to illustrate to Israel that her one God really was one. They had the idea of one God from the time of Moses, but with the multiplicity of places of worship, it was difficult to teach these peoples that they were worshipping one God whether they worshipped before Bethel's cow or Jerusalem's altar.

Other authorities can be cited as viewing Deuteronomy's purpose as centralization: Bewer, DeWette, Wellhausen, Hölscher and Sellin; all the above feel that the central theme is the one place of worship.

The great contribution of Welch is that he has shown us that there is another purpose in the promulgation of Deuteronomy.<sup>21</sup> He draws our attention away from that which has

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<sup>20</sup> Harry Emerson Fosdick, A Guide to Understanding the Bible, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1938, 5th edition) p. 27.

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<sup>21</sup> Welch, op. cit., p. 21.



always been our focal point and helps us to see that we have not told the whole story when we conclude that the purpose in the mind of the Deuteronomist was simply unity of God and unity of worship.

Examination of the document shows us that Welch is right. The section (12:29 - 13:18) is devoted in its entirety to the exhortation not to allow any heathen cult custom to enter the worship of Yahweh: (14: 1-2) deals further with cultic practice particularly the heathen mourning customs.

The whole of chapter twenty-six is devoted to ritual formularies whose purpose it is to keep pure the offering of the first fruits and the tithe offering.

Welch, speaking of the purpose in the selection of material for Deuteronomy, says:<sup>22</sup>

But the selection he has made of his material is very significant in determining what his purpose was in making the selection and he nowhere selects what bears on the unity of the place of worship or on the legitimate priesthood, instead of this he insists on what bears evidence to the distinctive, divinely authorized character of Israel's worship as contrasted with that of the heathen world among which they live.

Thus the various scholars give evidence to the three purposes stated as the purposes in the mind of the writers, and the book itself gives irrefutable evidence. The simple conclusion is then that since the purposes of Deuteronomy were fulfilled in the reform of Josiah, that reform was based on the Code of Deuteronomy.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 179.

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Thus the various scholars give evidence to the three purposes stated as the purposes in the mind of the writer, and the book itself gives irrefutable evidence. The simple conclusion is then that since the purpose of Deuteronomy was fulfilled in the reform of Josiah, that reform was based on the Code of Deuteronomy.



The above conclusion is not the only one that could follow: It could be sustained that the code was the written result of the reform if it were not that we have set the date for the writing of the code at 650 B.C., about twenty-five years before the reform.

Further, if the text of Deuteronomy can be shown to enjoin the action which took place during the reform, then without question the connection is established.<sup>23</sup> A few examples of this connection will be shown here: "Ye shall break down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars; and hew down their Asherim,"<sup>24</sup> seems to be very intimately connected with, "And he broke in pieces the pillars and cut down the Asherim."<sup>25</sup> Again there is a close connection between, "Neither shall there be a sodomite of the sons of Israel,"<sup>26</sup> and "And he broke down the houses of the sodomites that were in the house of Jehovah."<sup>27</sup>

Textually, there is no doubt of the connection between Deuteronomy and Josiah's reform. It still remains to be shown that this book is not the result of the reform but is rather the cause of it.

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<sup>23</sup> See Table I.

<sup>24</sup> Deuteronomy 7: 5.

<sup>25</sup> II Kings 23: 6.

<sup>26</sup> Deuteronomy 23: 17.

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It has been shown that a copy of a significant portion of Deuteronomy was available in 621 B.C. and it has also been shown that there is a close connection between the laws of the Deuteronomic code and results of the reform. Therefore, if the Code of Deuteronomy is not the book found in the temple, then there must have been another book in existence of similar nature to the Code of Deuteronomy. It is extremely unlikely that two such books would be produced in one century. If there was a book containing the law for the reform there would be no need of a later compilation of the laws. If there were two books surely the one most likely to be kept would be the one which inspired the reform.

Another line of argument is that the Code of Deuteronomy contains many laws which are not mentioned in Kings or which are changed somewhat when they are enforced. If this book we have were the result of the reform, the laws would have been made to coincide with the reform movement, as it is, practical considerations made Josiah change some of the laws; i.e., the priests were to remain in their homeland, according to Deuteronomy, but Josiah knew this would not work, that they would stir up trouble, so he took them to Jerusalem. From this consideration it follows that Deuteronomy or a portion thereof was the law book found in the temple.

Thus far the fact of the relationship of Deuteronomy has been established by: (1) showing it was written before 621 B.C.; (2) by proving a textual linkage between II Kings

It has been shown that a copy of a significant portion of Bentzen's was available in 1812, and it has also been shown that there is a close connection between the laws of the Bentzen code and results of the reform. Therefore, if the Code of Bentzen is not the book found in the temple, then there must have been another book in existence of similar nature to the Code of Bentzen. It is extremely unlikely that two such books would be produced in one century. If there was a book containing the law for the reform there would be no need of a later compilation of the law. If there were two books surely the one most likely to be kept would be the one which inspired the reform.

Another line of argument is that the Code of Bentzen contains many laws which are not mentioned in Kings or which are changed somewhat when they are enforced. If this book we have were the result of the reform, the laws would have been made to coincide with the reform movement, as it is, practical considerations made to change some of the laws, i.e., the priests were to remain in their homeland, according to Bentzen's theory, the priests knew this would not work, that they would stir up trouble, so the book came to Jerusalem. From this consideration it follows that Bentzen's or a portion thereof was the law book found in the temple.

Thus far the fact of the relationship of Bentzen's has been established by (1) showing it was written before 1812, (2) by proving a textual linkage between it and



twenty-two, and twenty-three, and Deuteronomy's laws; (3) by showing that the reform would be the logical outcome of this book rather than the basis of the book.

One question still remains to be answered. How much of our Deuteronomy was found? This is not the simple question it appears. Too many editors have had their hand in the making of our Deuteronomy. The best that can be said is that the law book found by Josiah contains the laws which he put in force in Israel. This would be but a small section of our present Deuteronomy, but of no more can one be certain. This line of thought coincides with Wellhausen's statement that this book must have been brief in order to be read as frequently as the record of II Kings has it read.<sup>28</sup> Skinner thinks it likely that the legislative kernel (12-26) was the book found! The rest he considers as editorial expansion.<sup>29</sup>

There is little that can be said about the length of the law book found beyond what has been said. One thing is sure, it did contain all the laws which were enforced by Josiah. Beyond this, nothing is certain and one dare not guess.

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<sup>28</sup> Julius Wellhausen, "Israel", Encyclopaedia Britannica, 9th edition, 1881. p. 117.

<sup>29</sup> Skinner, op. cit., p. 91.





## CHAPTER IV

### THE SPIRIT AND TEMPER OF DEUTERONOMY

To one who has caught the high idealism of the eighth century prophets, Deuteronomy, the master work of the seventh century seems to be quite a let down. After being on the height of a personal and devotional religion, we are again brought back to a sacrificial cultic type of worship and nationalistic religion. The eighth century produced the highest type of religious idealism in answering the questions; what is Yahweh, and what does he require of us? But the next century almost lost sight of the high ideals.

If, on the other hand, one approaches the Book of Deuteronomy on a very practical basis, it will be seen at once that the practice of the people as a whole is much better in the seventh century. The ideals of the eighth century are, we must remember, ideals. The laws of the seventh century are actual practice.

But these are just two centuries of Hebrew history. Deuteronomy takes a high place in the total view of Hebrew history. It stands as the great law book of Israel. It made Israel the nation of a book. This book which was to become The Book of the nation cannot be viewed as an isolated segment of the total history of that nation, but must be viewed as the result of a long struggle between conflicting forces in Israel's

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religious life.

In a real sense, this is the final synthesis of the two forces in Israel's religion, Sinai and Canaan. Sinai representing the ethical, covenant, inward personal conception of Yahweh; Canaan representing the cultic worship practices which became a part of Yahweh worship and for a time threatened to destroy the original ethical content of Yahweh's religion.

To use the Hegelian Dialectic, Deuteronomy can be conceived as the synthesis of the prophetic and the cultic religion in Israel. In fact, the Book of Deuteronomy, in its historic sections, presents, in dramatic form, the struggle which took place between prophet and cult. Using the device of placing itself at the beginning of history, rather than at the end, it forecasts (with a backward glance), the struggle to come, between Canaanite cult and prophetic religion. It tells that the people will be tempted to think that the Canaanites ought to have been all destroyed rather than to live and corrupt Yahweh worship.

In Deuteronomy the thesis is the demand of the prophets for justice, righteousness, and faith which the eighth century prophets uttered, over against sacrifice as the way to Yahweh. The antithesis is the stubbornly entrenched popular cult worship of Israel which was full of Canaanite influence. The synthesis is a reformed and purified cult limited to Jerusalem with the demand for righteousness as its center.<sup>1</sup>

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Perhaps it is easier to understand Deuteronomy as a compromise. Micah had rejected the cult,<sup>2</sup> Hosea rejected it,<sup>3</sup> Isaiah and Amos both called for righteousness rather than sacrifice. But in Deuteronomy, which has been shown to be written by the loyal remnant of Isaiah's pupils two or three generations removed, there is a compromise with the cult.

We care not condemn these prophets for losing their vision, they still had it,<sup>4</sup> but they were practical men. They knew pure ethical religion was too exacting on a nation living in the midst of a people who had sacrificial cults, on a nation which itself had always associated its own cultic sacrifice with the days of the Exodus. These men knew the cult was necessary if Yahweh worship was to be preserved at all. The people were not yet come to a place where they could worship without the external aids to worship that the cult offered. Therefore, in order to preserve Yahweh worship, they demanded in their compromise code, a purification and a centrally controlled cult.

The men of prophetic spirit who had the interest of true religion at heart and who felt the prophetic interpretation of it was necessary, were convinced that the only way they could attain their ends would be by retaining the external

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<sup>2</sup> Micah 6: 8.

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forms of religion, purified.<sup>5</sup>

There is another sense in which this is a compromise. The priest, due to the place the cult had in Yahweh worship, had come to be an important figure in the life of the nation; i.e., he was the only one who knew the proper ritual to make a proper sacrifice. Although not in the real wilderness tradition, still by the eighth century priests had come to have an influential part to play in national affairs. It is their influence which kept the Deuteronomist from demanding complete abolition of the sacrificial system.

One spirit dominates the work of the Deuteronomist; **that spirit is one of practicality, of realism.** They were writing in a day when the religion of Yahweh was at a low ebb. Manasseh was not responsive at all to the ethical call of the prophets. Popular religion was following the religion of the court. Nature cults, astral cults, and cultic immoralities were the fad.

The Deuteronomists were opposed to all they saw in the cult as is to be expected from their background, but they had the leaven of realism in their views. They knew a set of laws which abolished cults at once would never receive a hearing. They knew that the priests were now powerful enough to lead the people if they chose. (Note that they put their book where a priest would find it and introduce it, which shows how im-

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<sup>5</sup> Julius A. Bewer, Literature of the Old Testament, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1922, 1938 revision), p. 123.

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2 Julius A. Bower, Literature of the Old Testament (New York: Columbia University Press, 1922, 1933 revision), p. 123.



portant they considered the priests.) The finished product of this group of practical men was a masterpiece. Holding their ideal, the prophetic ideal, always in mind, they wrote the book that purified the cult by limiting it to Jerusalem.<sup>6</sup>

But the spirit of realism is not the spirit that was evident in Josiah's day. To the people of that day this was revolutionary. This was highly idealistic; the apparent principle was an exclusive, ethical and spiritual monotheism. The prophetic party, all but Jeremiah, would rejoice in Josiah's day. Here in a code that was made law by the king was more than they had ever hoped or dreamed for. Here were their ideals in practical fulfillment. Here in a national law were the principles which shine out through the messages of all the prophets; (1) the unity of Yahweh; (2) the unity of the sanctuary and (3) the combination of true social morality and wholehearted worship in accordance with a pure sacrificial system.<sup>7</sup>

In spirit and temper, then, the Code of Deuteronomy would match that of the prophets themselves, for it was their program brought to reality. Perhaps they hoped for more than occurred. Doubtless they did not expect the abuses that would come. As the law was written, they expected all true prophets could stand behind it and give it their unwaivering support.

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<sup>6</sup> By writing, I mean re-editing of an already partially formulated code.

<sup>7</sup> Bewer, op. cit., pp. 122-3.

perhaps they considered the matter.) The finished product of this group of practical men was a masterpiece. Holding their ideal, the prophetic ideal, always in mind, they wrote the book that purified the cult by lifting it to Jerusalem.<sup>6</sup>

But the spirit of realism is not the spirit that was evident in Isaiah's day. To the people of that day this was revolutionary. This was highly idealistic; the opposite principle was an exclusive, ethical and spiritual monotheism. The prophetic party, all but Jerusalem, would rejoice in Isaiah's day. There is a code that was made law by the king was more than they had ever hoped or dreamed for. There were their ideals in practical fulfillment. There in a national law were the principles which shine out through the messages of all the prophets: (1) the unity of Yahweh; (2) the unity of the sanctuary; and (3) the combination of true social morality and wholehearted worship in accordance with a pure sacrificial system.<sup>7</sup>

In spirit and temper, then, the Code of Deuteronomy would make that of the prophetic character, for it was their program brought to reality. Perhaps they hoped for more than occurred. Doubtless they did not expect the abuses that would come. As the law was written, they expected all true prophets could stand behind it and give it their unswerving support.

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<sup>7</sup> Deuter., ch. xii., vs. 1-13.



## CHAPTER V

### JEREMIAH AND THE REFORM

Jeremiah was born in the year 645 B.C. near the end of the long reign of Manasseh. His home city, Anathoth, lay at the very edge of the wilderness of Judah. The wild outlook and the scorching desert air which sweeps across this barren waste to Anathoth left their impression on Jeremiah which came out later in the tenor of his message.

His father was Hilkiah, a priest of Eli's line. From his father he learned the history and ideals of Judah. Religion was always a reality in his experience. Hosea's the prophet's teachings, were of greatest influence in shaping his message.

When Jeremiah became a young man he learned that his mother had dedicated him to be a prophet of Yahweh even before his birth. When he was twenty years old, he became conscious of a call to this field of work. He resisted the call, as most of us do, he says it frightened him. Finally one day it seemed to him as though he was in the presence of Yahweh hearing his voice saying:

Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you,  
And before you came forth out of the womb  
I set you apart;  
I have appointed you a prophet unto the nations.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah 1: 5.

## CHAPTER V

### THE REVELATION

Jeremiah was born in the year 625 B.C. near the end of the long reign of Manasseh. His home city, Anathoth, lay at the very edge of the wilderness of Judah. The wild outlook and the scorching desert air which sweeps across this barren waste to Anathoth left their impression on Jeremiah which came out later in the form of his message.

His father was Hilkiah, a priest of Eli's line. From his father he learned the history and ideals of Judah. Religion was always a reality in his experience. However, the prophet's teachings, were of greatest influence in shaping his message.

When Jeremiah became a young man he learned that his father had dedicated him to be a prophet of Yahweh even before his birth. When he was twenty years old, he became conscious of a call to this field of work. He resisted the call, as most of us do, he says in frightened him. Finally one day it seemed to him as though he was in the presence of Yahweh hearing the voice saying:

Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you,  
and before you came forth out of the womb  
I set you apart;  
I have appointed you a prophet unto the nations.

Jeremiah 1:5



But Jeremiah shrank from the calling, pleading his youthfulness and inexperience: "Alas! Lord Yahweh! Behold, I know not how to speak, For I am a boy!"<sup>2</sup>

With Yahweh's answer to him came a deep and strange but unwavering assurance:

Do not say, "I am but a boy";  
For to whomsoever I shall send you, you must go,  
And whatsoever I command you, you must speak.  
Be not afraid in their presence;  
For I will be with you and rescue you.<sup>3</sup>

From that hour his task was clear. It concerned not only his nation, but others as well. He was called to announce sharp condemnation and destruction upon all nations. Yet there was also to be a positive note as well:

Lo, I have put my words in your mouth;  
See, I have appointed you today  
Over nations and over kingdoms,  
To uproot and to pull down,  
To destroy and to tear down,  
To build and to plant.<sup>4</sup>

In these early days we note two experiences which he seemed to connect with his call. Just outside his door was an almond tree. Now the almond tree blossoms first in the spring, therefore, when you see it in bloom you know spring has really come. It burst into bloom one spring, (as it had many springs before), this time it reminded him of Yahweh's power alert in the world, his purposes flowering and issuing in fruitage, and he seemed to hear Yahweh say: "I am awake

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<sup>2</sup> Jeremiah 1: 6.

<sup>3</sup> Jeremiah 1: 7-8.

<sup>4</sup> Jeremiah 1: 9c-10.

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youthfulness and inexperience: "Alas! Lord Yahweh! Behold, I  
know not how to speak, for I am a boy."

With Yahweh's answer to him came a deep and strange  
but answering assurance:

"Do not say, 'I am but a boy';  
for to whomsoever I shall send you, you must go;  
and whosoever I command you, you must speak.  
Be not afraid in their presence;  
for I will be with you and rescue you."

From that hour his task was clear. It concerned not  
only his nation, but others as well. He was called to announce  
sharp condemnation and destruction upon all nations. Yet  
there was also to be a positive note as well:

Yes, I have put my words in your mouth;  
see, I have appointed you today  
over nations and over kingdoms,  
to uproot and to pull down,  
to destroy and to tear down,  
to build and to plant.

In these early days we note two experiences which he  
seemed to connect with his call. Just outside his door was  
an almond tree. Now the almond tree blossoms first in the  
spring, therefore, when you see it in bloom you know spring  
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many springs before), this time it reminded him of Yahweh's  
power alert in the world, his purpose flowering and issuing  
in fruitage, and he seemed to hear Yahweh say: "I am awake

Jeremiah 1:6.  
Jeremiah 1:7-8.  
Jeremiah 1:9-10.



over my word to accomplish it."<sup>5</sup>

It was the familiar sight of a boiling pot that gave Jeremiah his message of the Scythian invasion from the north. He saw the pot on the fire, the wind from the north boiled it over. This would mean that Yahweh was speaking to him of a dreadful evil he was going to send down from the north upon the world.

Soon the full meaning of what this vision meant came to him. The Scythians were coming; they were being stirred up by Yahweh against Judah. He tried to arouse the people from their indifference by showing them the dire disaster that threatened them:

Blow the trumpet in the land:  
 Call with a full blast.  
 Hasten! Gather yourselves and go in  
 To the fortified cities.  
 Lift the banner Zionward;  
 Take yourselves to safety, don't stand still!  
 For I am about to bring trouble from the north,  
 And a great shattering.  
 A lion has gone up from his thicket,  
 And a destroyer of nations has set out;  
 He has gone forth from his haunt,  
 To make your land a desolation.  
 Your cities shall be felled into ruin heaps  
 With no inhabitant.  
 Because of this, gird on sackcloth;  
 Lament and wail;  
 For the heat of Yahweh's anger  
 Has not turned away from us.<sup>6</sup>

Jeremiah called on the people of Jerusalem to save themselves by sincere repentance:

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<sup>5</sup> Jeremiah 1: 12.

<sup>6</sup> Jeremiah 4: 5b-8.

over my word to be accomplished it.  
It was the faintest sight of a walking man that gave  
Jeremiah his message of the Babylonian invasion from the north.  
He saw the pot on the fire, the wind from the north boiled  
it over. This would mean that Yahweh was speaking to him of a  
disaster - all he was going to send down from the north upon  
the world.

Soon the full meaning of what this vision meant came  
to him. The Babylonians were coming! They were being stirred  
up by Yahweh against Judah. He tried to arouse the people  
from their indifference by showing them the dire disaster  
that threatened them:

How the strangers in the land  
Call with a loud voice.  
Hearken! Gather yourselves and go in  
To the fortified cities.  
Lift the banner of alarm;  
Come ye, ye survivors to safety, don't stand still!  
For I am about to bring trouble from the north,  
And a great multitude.  
A lion has gone up from his lair;  
And a destroyer of nations has set out;  
He has gone forth from his haunt,  
To make your land a desolation.  
Your cities shall be laid into ruin heaps  
With no inhabitant.  
Because of this, give an exclamation;  
Lament and wail;  
For the heat of Yahweh's anger  
Has not turned away from us.

Jeremiah called on the people of Jerusalem to save

themselves by sincere repentance:

Jeremiah 18:1-10  
Jeremiah 18:11-13



Lo like the storm clouds he comes up,  
 Yes, like the storm wind are his chariots;  
 His horses are swifter than vultures.  
 Woe to us for we are made havoc!  
 O Jerusalem! wash the evil out of your heart,  
 In order that you may be saved.  
 How long shall your iniquitous thoughts  
 Find lodgment in your heart?<sup>7</sup>

The whole message is summed up in a thought we have come to think of as characteristic of Jeremiah--the message of doom, chaos and destruction.

For I hear a cry as of a woman in travail,  
 An outcry like one bearing her first child,  
 The cry of the daughter of Zion, she grasps for breath,  
 And she spreads out her hands.  
 'Alas for me,  
 My soul faints away,  
 Before the killers!'<sup>8</sup>

Jeremiah was influenced by Hosea; this is shown clearly when Jeremiah comes to condemn and show what was wrong with the people that Yahweh must punish them so severely.

I remember the loyalty of your youth,  
 The love at the time of your betrothal;  
 How you went after me in the desert,  
 In a land unsown.  
 Israel was holy to Yahweh,  
 The first fruits of his product.  
 Do nations exchange their gods?  
 Though they are no gods!  
 Yet my people have changed their glory  
 For what is of no benefit.  
 For two evils my people have done:  
 They have forsaken me, the spring of living water,  
 To dig for themselves cisterns,  
 Cracked cisterns which cannot hold water.  
 How can you say, 'I have not defiled myself,  
 Nor have I gone after the Baals?'  
 Although you wash with natron,  
 And use much lye,  
 Your iniquity stands blood-stained before me.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Jeremiah 4: 13-14.

<sup>8</sup> Jeremiah 4: 31.

<sup>9</sup> Jeremiah 2: 2-3a, 11, 13, 23a, 22.

Is like the storm clouds he comes up,  
Yes, like the storm wind are his chastises;  
His words are sharper than winter  
And so we are made wiser.  
I Jeremiah will be with you in heart,  
In order that you may be saved.  
How long shall your wickedness  
And judgment in your heart?

The whole message is summed up in a thought we have come  
to think of as characteristic of Jeremiah--the message of doom,  
chance and destruction.

For I hear a cry as of a woman in travail,  
An outcry like one bearing her first child,  
The cry of the daughter of Zion, she gropes for breath,  
And she spreads out her hands,  
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I remember the loyalty of your youth,  
The love at the time of your betrothal;  
How you went after me in the desert,  
In a land unknown.  
Israel was holy to Yahweh,  
The first fruits of his grain.  
No nations exchange their gods;  
Though they are no gods!  
But my people have changed their glory  
For what is of no benefit.  
For two evils my people have done:  
They have forsaken me, the spring of living water,  
To dig for themselves cisterns,  
Cracked cisterns which cannot hold water.  
How can you say, 'I have not defiled myself,'  
They have a gone after the Baalim?  
Although you wash with hyssop,  
And use much lye,  
Your iniquity stands blood-stained before me.

Jeremiah 2: 2-35, 11, 13  
Jeremiah 2: 35, 36, 37  
Jeremiah 2: 35, 36, 37



This ended the first phase of Jeremiah's ministry. In this phase he tried to warn the people of the danger from the Scythians and he reminded them of their sinfulness calling them to repentance. In this he got no hearing, the people were not moved.

If Jeremiah's preaching did not move the people, it was no sign that they were completely indifferent to religion. A reform movement swept the land, initiated by the finding of a scroll in the temple.

Thus Jeremiah's life can be quickly summarized until this point is reached. He was of priestly family, of prophetic temper, advocated reform and he warned the nation of Scythian invasion.

A difficult problem arises when the biographer enters the next phase of life for Jeremiah. A code of law found by the king had become the basis for a sweeping reform. The problem that must be faced is Jeremiah's attitude toward that reform.

The accepted view of many writers is that Jeremiah sponsored the reform at first, then later saw its weaknesses and ceased to advocate it.<sup>10</sup>

This view is based on the contrary opinions found in the oracles of Jeremiah. In (11: 1-8) there appears to be a

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<sup>10</sup> Julius A. Bewer, Literature of the Old Testament, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1922, 1938 revision) p. 135.  
 Harry Emerson Fosdick, A Guide to Understanding the Bible, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1938, 5th edition) p. 65, 206.  
 (continued)

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10. William A. Dever, Literature of the Old Testament

(New York: Columbia University Press, 1925, 1935 revision) p. 13.

Harry Emerson Fosdick, A Guide to Understanding the

Bible (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1931, 3rd edition) p. 53-54.

(continued)



reference to Jeremiah's going on a preaching tour advocating the reform. In(8: 8)there seems to be no doubt that he is criticizing the method by which Josiah's's reform was introduced. In order to explain this apparent paradox, the authorities have Jeremiah change his mind.

This is good psychology, the case is strong, it looks as if there is no doubt but what the case is made that Jeremiah changed his mind. A young prophet fired with enthusiasm at seeing a reform, national in scope, would certainly approve of that reform after he had spent five years preaching many of the things contained in the reform. After that enthusiasm died down and the meager results of the reform were seen and he had time to analyze it, nothing would be more natural than that he should speak against it, if it were not effective.

As strong as the case is, and as reasonable, still there seems to be something superficial about it. It demands that Jeremiah plunge into a movement without seeking or analyzing its origin and principles. It demanded that he change his mind, yet his whole message is driving toward the one goal, inward, personal religion. It makes him compromise his ideals with

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10 continued

Charles F. Kent, The Kings and Prophets of Israel and Judah, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909) p. 207 ff.

Elmer A. Leslie, The Prophets Tell Their Own Story, (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1939) p. 236 ff.

Charles Francis Potter, The Story of Religion, (Garden City: Garden City Publishing Co., Inc., 1929) p. 103 ff.

John Skinner, Prophecy and Religion, (Cambridge: The University Press, 1922) p. 88 ff.

George Adam Smith, Jeremiah, (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1923) p. 134 ff.

Elmer A. Leslie, Old Testament Religion, p. 209 ff.





the already compromised ideals of the Deuteronomists. Even more significant, it does not explain why Jeremiah was such a detested prophet. If he favored the reform there is little cause for the antagonism revealed in his life.

A more careful analysis of the facts must be made to ascertain Jeremiah's relationship to the reform. There are three possibilities. (1) He advocated it and then changed his mind; (2) he always opposed it; (3) he was indifferent to it. A fourth might be added: he instituted it by writing the book of Deuteronomy.

This latter possibility is discussed by Potter,<sup>11</sup> he suggests the possibility that Renan was right in ascribing Deuteronomy to Jeremiah. Was it not composed in the time of Jeremiah, and according to the ideas of Jeremiah? Perhaps Hilkiyah, the priest, was Jeremiah's father. Renan's argument continues that there are many clauses and phrases identically the same in the books of Jeremiah and Deuteronomy and a much larger amount of material is similar.

In the same passage cited, Potter also shows the connection might be in reverse order, an order which is far more likely; that Jeremiah had early read the book and had liked some parts so well he used them unconsciously later as his own.

Again it is to be remembered that the same hand which later edited Deuteronomy was also at work on Jeremiah. It is

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<sup>11</sup> Potter, op. cit., p. 115.

and already compromised ideas of the Heterodoxy. Even more significant, it does not explain why Jerusalem was such a delayed response. If he favored the reform there is little cause for the antagonism revealed in his life. A more careful analysis of the facts must be made to ascertain Jerusalem's relationship to the reform. There are three possibilities. (1) He advocated it and then changed his mind; (2) he always opposed it; (3) he was indifferent to it. A fourth might be added: he advocated it by writing the book of Heterodoxy.

This latter possibility is discussed by Potter, <sup>11</sup> he suggests the possibility that Heman was right in ascribing Heterodoxy to Jerusalem. Was it not composed in the time of Jerusalem, and according to the ideas of Jerusalem? Perhaps not. The point, was Jerusalem's father. Heman's argument convinced that there are many omissions and phrases identically the same in the books of Jerusalem and Heterodoxy and a much larger amount of material is similar.

In the same passage cited, Potter also shows the connection might be in reverse order, an order which is far more likely; that Jerusalem had early read the book and had liked some parts so well he used them verbatim later in his own. Again it is to be remarked that the same name which James cited Heterodoxy was also at work on Jerusalem. It is



more than likely that some of these similarities can be accounted for in this manner.

But this is Potter's straw man, he made it out of Renan's straw and he has demolished it with fair logic. No more need be said of this possibility.

The third possibility mentioned that he was indifferent to the reform, is too absurd to stand any investigation. Jeremiah was too much a part of his day and of the political life of that day to ignore that which was the most important national movement to take place in the reign of Josiah.

This leaves two theories of the relationship for study. The only fair way to decide the problem is to look at the record. The early sermons found in chapters two to six are reform sermons. Sermons which the authorities agreed were preached before 621 B.C. These sermons all condemn the immorality, the worship of the Canaanite Baal, the many foreign customs (Assyrian and Egyptian) and the peoples utter disregard for the ethical teachings of the prophets.

He threatens, pleads, and castigates the people. He, like Hosea, holds out the hope of reconciliation if Judah will repent and give up all these cults. When the usual methods of prophetic usage fail, he then turns to warnings of impending doom; the Scythian hords are coming to destroy, unless Judah repents. He adds that even now it may be too late, for the horses hoofs are at the door.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Kent, op. cit., p. 207 f.

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destruction. The Babylonian people are coming to destroy, unless Judah  
repents. He says that even now it may be too late, for the  
Babylonians are at the door.



Thus it is known that Jeremiah did want a reform. He saw the evil in his people and recognized the cause of trouble in the cultic practices which gave the people a false sense of security. The supposition that follows reasonably is that Jeremiah fell in step with Josiah's reform when it came along. A further look at the record will show the fallacy of this assumption.

We find a clue to Jeremiah's attitude toward the reform in the fact that his name is not mentioned in the record at all; while Huldah, a relatively unknown prophetess, is mentioned. Had he favored it, he would have been mentioned in order to give the added support of such a famous prophet. Of course this is discounted by the fact that Jeremiah was not yet prominent at the time of the beginning of the reform. Still, with all the editing, if Jeremiah had favored the reform, someone would have put his name into the narrative. This is a small point, but of great importance since it shows the Deuteronomic historian's conception of Jeremiah's attitude.

Strangely enough, Welch does not use this argument in his attempt to show that Jeremiah was not favoring the reform, but rather Welch chooses to concede this as a point of no account.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Adam C. Welch, Jeremiah, (London: Oxford University Press, 1928) p. 76.





The next evidence in the record is Jeremiah's own oracles which bear on this problem. The first is (3: 6-13.) This oracle is addressed to the people at Bethel and seems to imply that Bethel with all its wickedness is better than Judah with her fine reform. This is not worded thus because Jeremiah does not know the true evil of Bethel; he does know it and enumerates it in this passage in question. Verse ten is the crucial point of this oracle. "And for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not returned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith Yahweh." The force of this verse depends on when it is written. Bewer places it in the reign of Josiah,<sup>14</sup> as does the oracle itself.<sup>15</sup> Welch places the verse in the early days of the reform about 620-618 B.C.<sup>16</sup> Skinner says that it was written, if by Jeremiah at all, in the post-Deuteronomic period.<sup>17</sup> From the content only one fact can be gathered, that it was written after a reform was initiated or it would have no meaning; so we may accept it as after the 621 B.C. reform since that was the only reform of Jeremiah's ministry.

Now for the attitude it expresses. Judah is worse than Bethel, Bethel is sinful, lustful and all of that, but Judah pretends to follow Yahweh, and does not. In this Judah is worse. The reform then is false, not accomplishing its desired end, but rather lulling the people into a false sense

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<sup>14</sup> Bewer, op. cit., p. 167.

<sup>15</sup> Jeremiah 3: 6.

<sup>16</sup> Welch, op. cit., p. 78.

<sup>17</sup> Skinner, op. cit., p. 80.

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 after the old B.C. reform since that was the only reform of  
 Jeremiah's ministry.

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<sup>14</sup> See, e.g., Jer. 1: 1-23. <sup>15</sup> See, e.g., Jer. 1: 1-23.  
<sup>16</sup> See, e.g., Jer. 1: 1-23. <sup>17</sup> See, e.g., Jer. 1: 1-23.



of security.

The second oracle is to be found in the eighth chapter, the eighth verse. "How do you say, we are wise, and the law of Yahweh is with us? But behold the false pen of the scribe hath wrought falsely." There is no doubt that this is a reference to a written Torah rather than to an oral or series of oral pronouncements of the priests.<sup>18</sup> Welch points out that this oracle comes out of a heated argument over an authoritative Torah. The priests thought they had it, but Jeremiah tells them that theirs is false, it is filled with lies.<sup>19</sup> (Assuming their Torah was Deuteronomy.)

This oracle is quite difficult to date since it appears to stand alone out of its proper connection. But both Welch,<sup>20</sup> and Bewer,<sup>21</sup> agree in placing it in Josiah's reign. There seems then nothing for this oracle to refer to except the Code of Deuteronomy.

To inter<sup>pret</sup> the oracle then, in light of this, it must simply mean that Jeremiah recognized this latest edition of Deuteronomy as untrue to the real precepts of Yahweh. There had never been a demand for centralization in the prophetic line. (In the direct line with Jeremiah the emphasis was against sacrifice even in the Jerusalem temple.)

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 103.

<sup>19</sup> Welch, op. cit., p. 90.

<sup>20</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>21</sup> Bewer, op. cit., p. 167.

of security.

The second oracle is to be found in the eighth chapter, the eighth verse. "Now do you say, we are wise, and the law of Yahweh is with us? But behold the false men of the scribble hath wrought falsely." There is no doubt that this is a reference to a written Torah rather than to an oral or series of oral pronouncements of the priests. 18 Which points out that this oracle comes out of a heated argument over an authoritative Torah. The priests thought they had it, but Jeremiah tells them that theirs is false, it is filled with lies. 19 (Assuming that Torah was Deuteronomy.)

This oracle is quite difficult to date since it appears to stand alone out of its proper connection. But both Welch, 20 and Driver, 21 agree in placing it in Josiah's reign. There seems then nothing for this oracle to refer to except the Code of Deuteronomy.

To insert the oracle then, in light of this, is most simply seen that Jeremiah recognized this latest edition of Deuteronomy as unique to the real prophets of Yahweh. There had never been a demand for centralization in the prophetic line. (In the direct line with Jeremiah the emphasis was against sacrifice even in the Jerusalem temple.)

- 18 Ibid., p. 103.
- 19 Welch, op. cit., p. 90.
- 20 Ibid., cit.
- 21 Driver, op. cit., p. 107.



Now, of the three oracles that speak of the reform, these first two are clearly against the reform or at least the code. They have been dated early enough by sufficiently eminent scholars to have them come during the reform itself; therefore, the conclusion is that Jeremiah was not favoring the reform because it was, (1) false in principle and (2) based on a falsified law.

But there is another passage discussed earlier,<sup>22</sup> which has commonly been interpreted as implying that Jeremiah not only favored the movement, but that he even became a traveling preacher of that reform. This section (11: 1-8) is a strange passage in that it contains a duplicate record within the compass of eight consecutive verses. One to five pronounces a curse on all who will not listen to the covenant. The covenant, it is stated, is that one entered into by Israel with Yahweh immediately after the Exodus. The next section (6-8) repeats the same thing just a bit differently. Jeremiah is to go preach the words of this covenant, and this section concludes with the statement that the nation has never obeyed this covenant and is now suffering and has been suffering for its disobedience.

Of course it is not the matter of parallelism that is important. The most important question is, which covenant was meant. The usual reply is that there ~~was~~ only one covenant in

disagreement among the remainder of the prophets of his day. If

<sup>22</sup> See above, p. 38.

Now, of the three angles that meet at the reform, these first two are clearly against the reform or at least the code. They have been dated early enough by sufficiently authentic scholars to have been some during the reform itself; therefore, the conclusion is that Jeremiah was not favoring the reform because it was, (1) false in principle and (2) based on a defunct law.

But there is another passage discussed earlier, which has commonly been interpreted as implying that Jeremiah not only favored the movement, but that he even became a traveling preacher of that reform. This section (Jer. 1:1-10) is a message conveyed in that it contains a duplicate record within the compass of eight consecutive verses. One to five pronounced a curse on all who will not listen to the covenant. The next verse, as is stated, is that one entered into by Israel with Yahweh immediately after the Exodus. The next section (Jer. 2:1-3) repeats the same thing just a bit differently. Jeremiah is to go preach the words of this covenant, and this section concludes with the statement that the nation has never obeyed this covenant and is now suffering and has been suffering for its disobedience.

Of course it is not the matter of politicalism that is important. The most important question is, which covenant was meant. The usual reply is that there was only one covenant in



the minds of the people at the time this was written, and that was the covenant Josiah caused the people to make.

But there is a textual difficulty that makes this impossible. Jeremiah tells that this covenant was not kept, but Josiah's covenant was kept; therefore, Jeremiah is referring to the covenant of the people of Israel made at Sinai. This then cannot mean, as has been supposed for so long, that Jeremiah was out preaching in favor of the reform of Josiah. If Jeremiah went preaching, at all, and there are no grounds on which to deny that he did, then he preached the older code and not this new one.

It would seem very strange for a prophet of the temper and spirit of Jeremiah to advocate a law which he knew to be relatively new; and which had concepts and demands in it which he knew were not a part of the original Sinai covenant. Jeremiah and Hosea, above all the prophets since Moses, had caught the spirit of this covenant at Sinai. They knew it was individual and personal, a matter not of sacrifice but of relationship, a relationship in righteousness. Therefore, if any of the prophets favored this Deuteronomic Reform, Jeremiah assuredly was not among them.

There are two additional considerations which show that Jeremiah opposed the reform of Josiah. He, above most other prophets, was hated and silenced by the leaders and was in disgrace among the remainder of the prophets of his day. If he had been favoring this reform, a popular movement, he

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would have been more popular than the record shows.

A final consideration is a general one based on the trend of the higher prophecy of the Old Testament. Skinner says:<sup>23</sup>

The general conclusion to which we are led is that the higher prophecy of the Old Testament represents a transitional phase in the development of religion from a nationalistic basis, on which history is the chief medium of divine revelation, to an individual and universal basis, on which God enters into immediate fellowship with the human soul.

Jeremiah was pretty well along in the line of Hebrew "higher prophecy." He had the conception of a "new covenant," one written on the heart of man rather than on stone.<sup>24</sup> Now is it likely that he would advocate this law code which set the Jerusalem priesthood between man and Yahweh?

The conclusion is that Jeremiah did not advocate the reform of Josiah. This conclusion is arrived at from three different lines of thought. (1) A study of the text reveals that Jeremiah opposed the reform. (2) From Jeremiah's place in the prophetic line of Hebrew "higher prophecy" it is concluded that he would not have favored it. (3) Finally, from his own spirit and temper, it can be argued that he did not favor the reform.

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<sup>23</sup> Skinner, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>24</sup> Jeremiah 31: 33 ff.

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23 Skinner, op. cit., p. 14.

24 Jeremiah 31: 33 ff.



## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSIONS

1. Deuteronomy is not a book written in one isolated period of history, but it is a book that has grown through successive re-editing until today we have our rather large volume of the codification of the second law with its several introductions and conclusions. The edition may have begun as early as the time of Samuel and may not have ended until the canon was set.

2. One edition of Deuteronomy was done by the prophetic school of Isaiah and Micah during the reign of Manasseh, after the reform under Hezekiah failed.

3. This edition was edited with several purposes in mind; (a) to purify the worship of Yahweh; (b) to centralize all worship in Jerusalem where it could be controlled and (c) to unify the people in one worship, of one God, by one nation; it was a nationalistic movement.

4. This book, placed in the temple, and found by Hilkiah and Shaphan, was the basis of his reform movement in 621 B.C. This reform was cruel in its ruthless suppression of every sign of heathenism. It did accomplish the external and perhaps the only aims of the writers as set down in number three above.

5. Jeremiah was a man of keen insight, well educated in the tradition of his people. He saw beyond the purposes of

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5. Jeremiah was a man of keen insight, well educated in the tradition of his people. He saw beyond the purposes of



this law and saw how superficial it was; therefore, he became outspoken against its principle and method.

6. Jeremiah's higher insight is expressed in his new covenant, which he drew from his conception of the Sinai covenant. This new covenant is expressed by the symbolism of a writing on the heart rather than on the stones. Religion is inward and personal, not external.

On the basis of the record, contrary to the large number of authorities, the author differs in his conclusion concerning the relationship of Jeremiah to the Deuteronomic Reform and concludes that Jeremiah actively supported reform, but not the kind of reform based on Josiah's law book. He wanted reform in the "inward parts" of the people.

No Foreign Gods	22:17; 23:14	5:11; 10:11; 11:12
No star worship	23:14, 15, 17, 22	4:19; 12:13
No Schemite Gods	23:15; 28:10	7:16
No high places	23:15; 28:13	7:5; 12:12
No idols	23:14	7:5; 25:12; 13
No standing stones	23:14	7:5; 12:13
No Asherim	23:15, 16	7:5; 12:13
No ephodim	23:14	10:11
No child sacrifice	23:10	12:3; 12:10
No temple prostitutes	23:7	23:17
Central sanctuary	23:5, 8, 13, 15, 19, 23	12:3-4
Friends of high places	23:16, 17	10:10-11
Passover	23:21-23	10:5-7

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TABLE I

## PARALLEL PASSAGES IN II KINGS AND DEUTERONOMY

<u>Subject</u>	<u>II Kings</u>	<u>Deuteronomy</u>
Book of the Torah	22:8,11	17:18f.
Covenant	23:2,3,21	17:2;28:69
Torah of Moses	23:25	1:5;31:9
Words of the Book	22:13,16	31:24
Worship of Yahweh only	22:17;23:3	5:6;6:4
Keep Commandments	23:3	11:1;13:6
With heart and soul	23:3	13:4
Harken to words	22:13	18:19
No foreign Gods	22:17;23:4	6:14;8:19;11:28
No star worship	23:4,5,11,12	4:19;17:3
No Canaanite Gods	23:5b,8b,10	7:16
No high places	23:5a,8a,13	7:5;12:2
No idols	23:24	7:5,25;12:3
No standing stones	23:14	7:5;12:3
No Asherim	23:6,14	7:5;12:3
No necromancy	23:24	18:11b
No child sacrifice	23:10	12:31;18:10
No temple prostitutes	23:7	23:17f.
Central sanctuary	23:5,8,13,15,19,23	12:5-4
Priests of high places	23:8a,9	18:6-8
Passover	23:21-23	16:5-7

TABLE I

PAVANESE MESSAGES IN II KINGS AND DEUTERONOMY

Deuteronomy	II Kings	Subject
17:18-19	22:17,18	Book of the Torah
18:22:18-19	22:17,18	Government
19:23:18	22:17	Town of Israel
21:24	22:17,18	Words of the Book
21:24:14	22:17:18	Worship of Yahweh only
21:24:18	22:17	Keep Commandments
21:24	22:17	With heart and soul
21:24	22:17	Heaven to earth
21:24:18-19	22:17:18	No foreign gods
21:24:18	22:17,18	No star worship
21:24	22:17,18	No Canaanite gods
21:24:18	22:17,18	No high places
21:24:18	22:17	No idols
21:24:18	22:17	No standing stones
21:24:18	22:17	No Ashteroth
21:24	22:17	No necromancy
21:24:18	22:17	No child sacrifice
21:24	22:17	No temple prostitutes
21:24	22:17,18,19,20	General sanctuary
21:24	22:17	Places of high places
21:24	22:17	Temple



TABLE I (continued)

Wrath kindled	22:13,17	11:17
Curses written	22:13	29:20
Bring evil	22:16	31:17,21,29
Provokes anger	22:17	31:29b
Astonishment curse	22:19	28:37

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TABLE I (continued)

With kindled	22:13.17	11:17
Curse written	22:13	29:20
Bring evil	22:13	31:17, 21:29
Provokes anger	22:17	31:29p
Astonishment curse	22:19	28:37



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THE RELATIONSHIP OF JEREMIAH  
TO THE DEUTERONOMIC REFORM

The primary sources of this study are copious and reliable: II Kings twenty-two and twenty-three, II Chronicles thirty-four and thirty-five, the excellent historical record of the reform under Josiah. The Book of Jeremiah, in spite of textual difficulties, reveals the spirit, temper, and attitudes of the prophet. The Deuteronomist reveals himself to be the basis of the reform and thereby gives additional evidence to the spirit, temper, and purpose of the reform.

Abstract of a Thesis  
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A study of the historical record reveals that a reform was instituted in 621 B.C. by Josiah based on a book found in the temple. This reform purified the worship of Judah of all Canaanite influences; it centralized the worship in Jerusalem; it destroyed all heathen or Jewish altars except the one in Jerusalem. From the results and lack of permanency, it is concluded that this was not a natural reform growing out of long-standing conditions but a deliberate one. The record gives the exact date, as the finding of a roll of law in the temple. The next problem is to identify that roll. On the assumption that it was Deuteronomy, one can study that book and note that its spirit, temper, and purpose are a parallel

by

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The primary sources of this study are copious and reliable. II Kings twenty-two and twenty-three, II Chronicles thirty-four and thirty-five give an excellent historical record of the reform under Josiah. The Book of Jeremiah, in spite of textual difficulties, reveals the spirit, temper, and attitudes of the prophet. The Book of Deuteronomy reveals itself to be the basis of the reform and thereby gives additional evidence to the spirit, temper, and purpose of the reform.

A study of the historical record reveals that a reform was instituted in 621 B.C. by Josiah based on a book found in the temple. This reform purified the worship of Judah of all heathen influence; it centralized the worship in Jerusalem; it destroyed all heathen or Jewish altars except the one in Jerusalem. From the results and lack of permanency, it is surmised that this was not a natural reform, growing out of longstanding needs, but a reform artificially produced by some event or incident in the life of the king. The record gives the cause, as the finding of a roll of law in the temple.

The next problem is to identify that roll. On the assumption that it was Deuteronomy, one can study that book and note that its spirit, temper, and purpose are a parallel

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of the spirit, temper, and purposes of the reform as seen in the historical record. The spirit and temper of both were cruel, ruthless, demanding obedience or death or suffering. The purposes of Deuteronomy coincides with those of the reform; therefore, this book is connected with the reform.

The connection may be either of two ways: (1) it may be that the Book of Deuteronomy is the compiled laws after the reform or (2) it may be that this is the law book of the reform.

Then it must be established that there was a copy of Deuteronomy available previous to 621 B. C. in order to state that Deuteronomy was the book found and the cause of the reform.

An examination of all the possibilities of date and authorship reveals that there were many editions of this book. They were being issued and compiled, from the time of Samuel to the days following the exile. One particular edition was written in 650 B.C. by the remnant of Micah's school of prophets. This edition was carefully edited to emphasize the centralization of the cult in Jerusalem.

In order to more firmly establish the fact that an edition of the Code of Deuteronomy was the cause and not the result, other evidence may be offered. If this book were the result of the reform, then it would contain only the laws Josiah promulgated, but it contains more and some different

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laws; therefore, it is earlier and the laws in the reform were modified or changed to suit the need.

No one can recover the original code found by Josiah, but it is reasonable to assume that it did contain a brief hortatory introduction and the laws, at least, which were enforced at the time of the reform. We are sure it was much shorter than our Deuteronomy; it was read two times in one day with no mention of any unusual effort.

After establishing Josiah's reform as a Deuteronomic reform and showing its spirit, temper and purposes, the main problem is reached. How did Jeremiah relate himself to this reform?

Jeremiah was born in the priestly line but of a prophetic spirit. He was deeply effected by the record of Hosea's preaching. Jeremiah truly belongs to the higher prophets of the Old Testament. The spirit of these men was violently opposed to sacrifice as a way to God. They were interested in a personal and universal religion. Cast this with what is the spirit of the reform and it is evident that Jeremiah would oppose the reform movement from its inception. it was nationalistic and external rather than internally personal and international.

A study of Jeremiah's oracles will reveal that he favored reform, but not this reform of Josiah's. He may have gone on a tour preaching reform in compliance with a covenant,

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but that covenant was the Sinai covenant rather than the Deuteronomic one. He called the Deuteronomic code a lying book made false by the lying pen of the scribe. He told Judah that she was worse off than Bethel since she, Judah, had never lived according to the covenant, yet thought she was.

In conclusion, the sum of all the study is that Jeremiah did not **approve** of the principle or method of this reform under Josiah and that he spoke fearlessly against the dangers of it. This does not deny that he may have seen much that was good in the reform, but it does intend to show that Jeremiah did not actively support it at any time.











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